

Applicants elect, with traverse, Group I, Claims 1-11, 19-27, and 42, drawn to a gene encoding a protein, a recombinant vector, transgenic plant or a method of imparting salt stress in a plant comprising said gene, for further prosecution.

Applicants traverse that Restriction Requirement on the grounds that the Office has not made a proper case under the PCT rules to support the lack of unity because the claims of Groups II and III depend directly from the claims of Group I. Therefore, these groups should not be separated as Groups II and III by definition require the special technical feature of Group I. Accordingly, the criteria for unity of invention are satisfied.

MPEP in §803 states as follows:

If the search and examination of an entire application can be made without a serious burden, the Examiner must examine it on the merits, even though it includes claims to distinct or independent inventions.

Applicants respectfully submit that a search of all the claims would not impose a serious burden on the Office. In fact, the International Searching Authority has searched all of the claims together.

Applicants submit that the present application is in condition for examination on the merits. Early notification to this effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,  
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Stephen G. Baxter, Ph.D.  
Registration No. 32,884

Vincent K. Shier, Ph.D.  
Registration No. 50,552

Customer Number  
**22850**

Tel: (703) 413-3000  
Fax: (703) 413-2220  
(OSMMN 08/03)